

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 8: Out-of-Home Services Section 39: Trial Home Visits (THV)	
	Effective Date: January 1, 2026	Version: 10

POLICY OVERVIEW

A Trial Home Visit (THV) transitions the child from out-of-home care to live with their parent, guardian, or custodian to help reach reunification and permanency.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will get a court order to start a THV, lasting up to three (3) months. During the THV, DCS still has placement and care responsibilities for the child.

Note: DCS will make contact with the child and family **within 24 hours** of learning of a critical incident (e.g., risk of removal, new child abuse and/or neglect (CA/N) allegations, runaway situations, pregnancy of the child, lack of parental contact). DCS will monitor the situation and meet with the Child and Family Team (CFT) to decide if additional services or supports for the family are needed.

Trial Home Visit Extensions

DCS will seek a court order for a 3-month THV extension, before the end of the first three (3) months, if needed.

The following conditions must be met to extend a THV:

1. The child's permanency goal is reunification;
2. There is documented progress toward Case Plan/Prevention Plan goals;
3. Safety concerns have been addressed; and
4. The service level of the case can be decreased at least one (1) level.

Note: Each three (3) month extension must be approved by the court before the current order ends.

LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 31-34-3-4.7: Notice to the child's school](#)
- [IC 31-34-4-8: Change in temporary out-of-home placement; consideration of separation of siblings](#)
- [IC 31-34-23-3: Notice and hearing requirements; change in out of home placement; temporary order for emergency change of placement](#)
- [IC 31-34-23-5: Placement of a child with a previous placement](#)
- [IC 31-34-23-6: Notice and hearing requirements: change in out-of-home placement](#)
- [45 CFR 1356.21 \(e\): Trial home visits](#)